

## 3.2 Web design and publishing

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### 3.2.1 Introduction

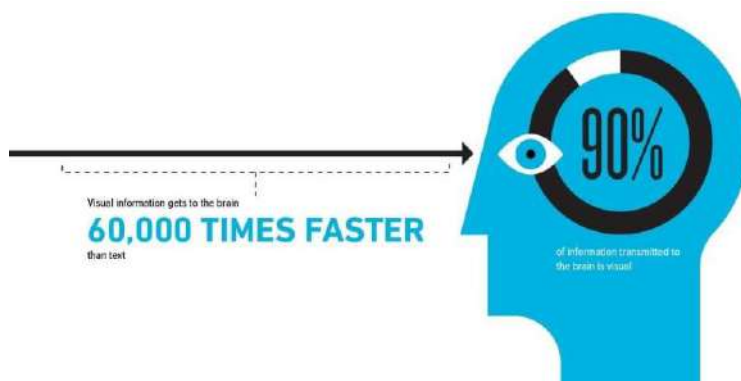
Social media has changed the way we live our lives. From how we get our news to how we interact with our loved ones. Social media is everywhere. It's inevitable, it's powerful, and it's here to stay.

Since 2004, social media has been growing exponentially and has yet to reach the peak of its popularity. It's undeniable that social media platforms are now a significant source of news and information. But that is not all. Social media platforms are unique in the way they interact with customers. They provide a platform for users to communicate across local and social boundaries and offer numerous possibilities to share user-generated content such as photos and videos.

**Sixty-three per cent of social media is made up of images.** According to a Citrix report from January, nearly two-thirds of the updates you see on social media are visual content.

Nearly half of all Internet users have reposted a photo or video they have found online. Moreover, content with relevant images gets 94 per cent more views than content without.

Images are the No. 1 most important factor in optimal social media content. The brain processes ~~1.5~~60,000 times faster than it does text.



*Figure 3.1 The brain processes visuals 60,000 times faster than it does text*  
(<https://killervisualstrategies.com/blog/how-our-brains-are-hardwired-for-visual-content.html>)

### 3.2.2 Rules for creating Good Graphics

#### a) *Grid*

The clear divisions of a classic design grid ensure a uniform structure across single pages as well as across chapters and entire books.

The graphical and informative hierarchy should be visible in all designs and is particularly important in complex pieces, where an explicit logical order benefits readers of varying abilities.

#### b) *Colour*

Colour perception can be affected by congenital vision problems or the effects of age, injury, or the environment. The contrast between colour values and between shades affects the way everyone experiences print design.

A good rule of thumb is to ensure at least a 70% difference in colour value between, say, type and a background tone. Then, if the colour type and other graphic elements seem to blend, adjust the values accordingly to improve the contrast ratio.

#### c) *Beyond big type*

A designer can adjust many typographic features beyond point size to make printed documents more accessible to all. The process begins with considering two interrelated but distinct factors that drive accessible type design: Legibility and Readability.

Legibility is determined by the specific typographic features that affect the recognition of letters and words. The main typographic factors are shape, scale and style.

Readability refers to the clarity and speed with which content can be digested over a length of text, such as a paragraph or a page. The main factors determining this are size, spacing and alignment.

#### d) *Shape/weight and scale*

The relationship between stroke and counter determines the recognition of the letter. The most legible fonts have a well-balanced proportion of shape and counter form. So, a regular or medium font weight will generally be preferable to an extra bold or ultra-light.

Several proportional factors define the scale of a letterform. For example, typefaces with high x-height are thought to be easier to read because they appear larger when viewed at the same point size as those with short x-height. Another proportional factor that defines typographic scale is a font's width-to-height ratio. The most legible fonts have relatively equal width-to-height proportions.

### e) *Style*

Most fonts fall into two categories: display fonts, which are more decorative, and text fonts, designed for readability and versatility. When applied with high contrast, a font like Tiresias Infofont can significantly improve readability in these environments. Therefore, it is used for signage in buildings and public spaces.



Figure 3.2 Tiresias Infofont

### f) *Dimension*

Font readability can be improved by manipulating two key variables: point size and column width or row length.

Telling a specific point size as an accessibility standard is difficult, if not impossible. Each typeface is unique, and many factors affect the readability of the type. When making design decisions, the key is to be sensitive to these optical characteristics.

The ability to receive information quickly is also affected by column width or line length, whether the text appears to be set in columns.

If columns are too narrow, many words must be awkwardly hyphenated, and readers cannot receive a meaningful amount of content in a typical scanning path across the page.

If the columns are too wide, the eyes have trouble finding the starting point for each new line of text. In both cases, the result is likely to be eye fatigue and increased reading time.

### g) *Alignment*

In Western cultures, the left-aligned type is easier for people to read quickly - for the apparent reason that we read from left to right. The justified text also provides the right-left line those Western readers prefer. But because both sides of the column are aligned, the spacing of the text inside becomes inconsistent, creating noticeable blank spots between words. This, in turn, can negatively affect readability.

Here are the basic principles that should be followed when creating web-based components:

### a) *Perceivable*

Web-based content and interface components should be presented in ways that all users can understand, even if they have limitations. The key to ensuring readability is contrast, which is determined by the size of the text and the ease with which letterforms can be distinguished in a given font.

### b) *Operable*

All users accessing a website or online application, regardless of how they operate their computers - via mouse, keyboard, voice recognition, switches or any other input device - should be able to simply and accurately manipulate all interface and navigation components, e.g. make all functionality fully accessible from a keyboard including, by default, all links, buttons, and form fields. Avoid creating custom interface components such as clickable ranges that use JavaScript.

### c) *Understandable*

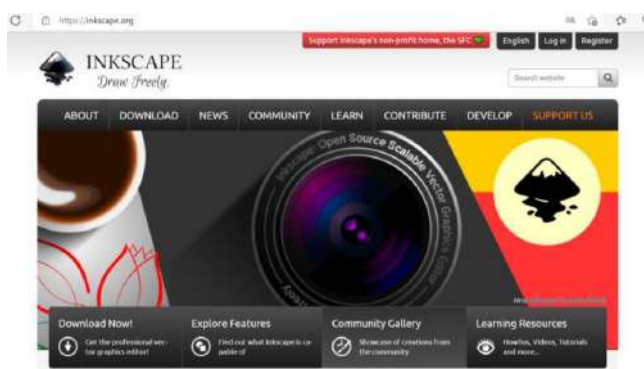
We need to make content and interfaces as straightforward as possible for all people, namely to ensure that web pages and interface elements are intuitively predictable in the way they appear and function; to design consistent interfaces that immediately indicate where users are on the site, what they can do there and what comes next.

### d) *Robust*

It means we must ensure that it can be reliably interpreted by the widest variety of browsers, devices and assistive technologies.

## 3.2.3 Most popular graphic programmes

[Inkscape](https://inkscape.org):



*Figure 3.3 How does Inkscape look like?*

Inkscape is a free, open-source graphics editor that works with Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux. It offers

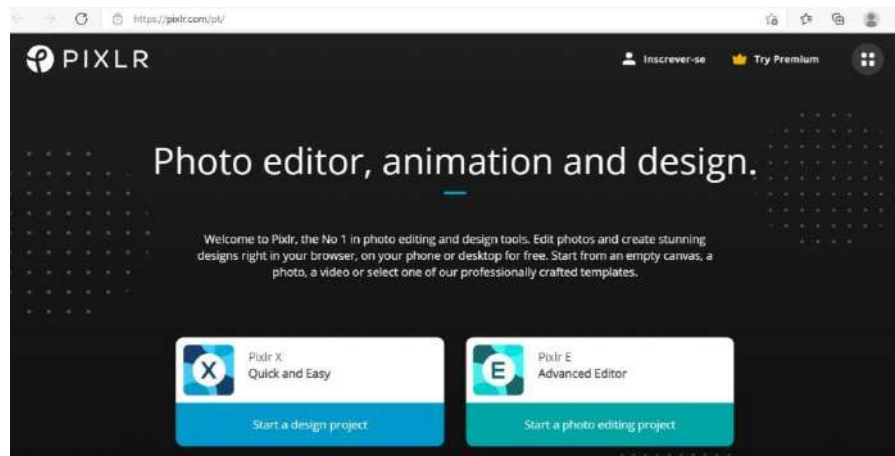
drawing and text tools that enable you to create almost any imagery you like. Moreover, it's a tool that's completely free. Inkscape is perhaps not the most beginner-friendly tool, as you'll need at least a little skill in drawing to create complex images. However, if that suits you or you're just looking to develop some basic graphics, Inkscape is an excellent and well-supported option.

#### Key Features:

- Drawing, shape, and text tools enable you to create freehand images.
- Object manipulation features, such as transformations, groupings, and layers.
- Plenty of options when it comes to colours, gradients, and patterns.
- Advanced graphic design functionality for more experienced users.

Pricing: As we mentioned, Inkscape is free.

### *Pixlr*



*Figure 3.4 How does Pixlr look like?*

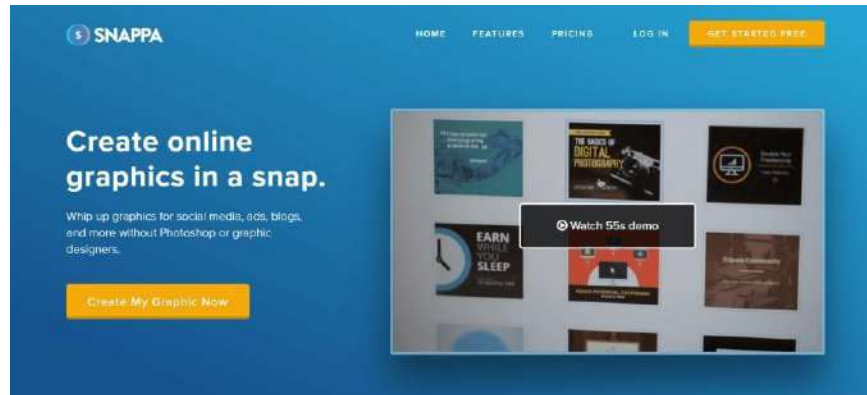
If you want something a little more basic and approachable, Pixlr is another solid option. This image editor can be used in your browser – no download is required. Plus, there's a mobile app version so that you can work on your images anywhere. The basic Pixlr editor is pretty straightforward and includes all the tools you'll likely need to create basic branding and marketing images. However, if you want a little more help getting started, the premium version offers many stock images and pre-made templates. This makes it simple for non-designers to build something that looks professional quickly.

#### Key Features:

- Available as a browser-based tool or mobile app.
- Drawing, shape, colour, and other essential graphic design tools.
- Millions of stock images you can use and 10,000+ templates (premium only).
- Advanced design tools include layer masks and blend modes (premium only).

Pricing: The basic Pixlr editor is free, while the Pro version will cost you \$5 per month to access.

## Snappa



*Figure 3.5 How Snappa looks like?*

If you're looking for a scalable graphic design tool Snappa is one to check out. It offers a free version with plenty of basic functionality and premium tiers that provide unlimited designs and downloads. Along with all the essential graphic design tools, you'll get stock photos and pre-made templates to use. Several fonts, vectors, shapes, and visual effects can also be used. This makes Snappa one of the top design tools if you have no design experience but want to develop visual branding for your business.

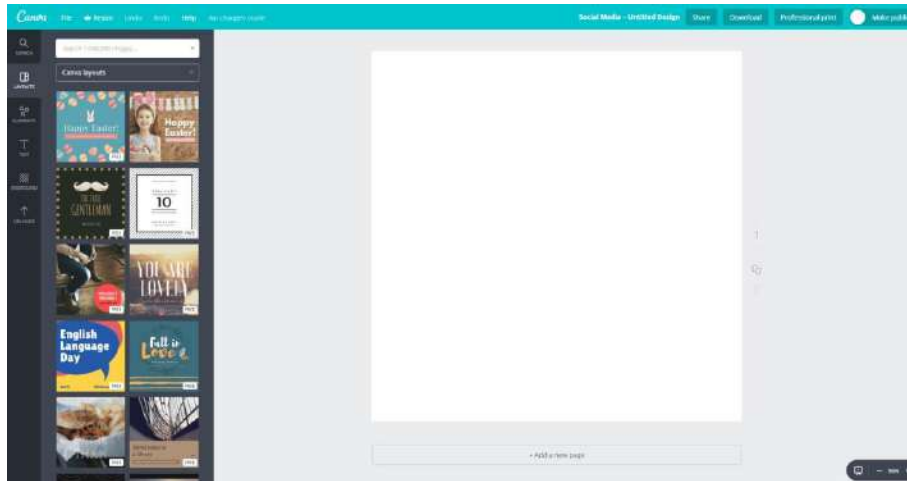
### Key Features:

- You'll need all the basic graphics, shapes, and text tools to design images from scratch.
- Plenty of images, templates, backgrounds, effects, and more.
- Present image dimensions so you can quickly design images for specific purposes (for [use on social media sites](#)).
- Functionality to help you share your graphics on social media platforms.

Pricing: The free plan will let you download five images per month, while the premium versions offer unlimited downloads, templates, and team collaboration features.

## *Canva*

For non-designers, a standout design tool should be quick to learn and easy to use. Canva manages both of those requirements effortlessly. In addition, it's a standout when it comes to user-friendly design, offers a straightforward interface, and may be the simplest tool on this list to pick up.



*Figure 3.6 How does Canva look like?*

That doesn't mean Canva lacks when it comes to features. It offers several layouts organized into categories such as social graphics, logos, and web banners. There's also a drag-and-drop builder to help you create attractive images quickly. Plus, you'll get access to lots of additional elements you can use to personalize your images.

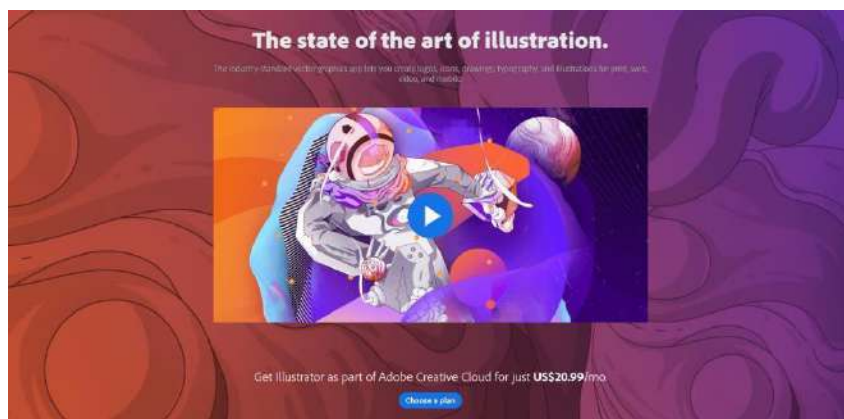
#### Key Features:

- Plenty of choices when it comes to text, colours, and backgrounds.
- Includes a drag-and-drop builder for easy editing.
- A vast library of stock photographs, vectors, illustrations, and pre-made templates.
- Photo filters, icons, fonts, and more elements simplify customising your images.

Pricing: Canva is free to use, as are its many templates. There's also a premium plan with more storage, advanced features, and collaborative tools.

#### *Adobe Illustrator*

Finally, we came to the biggest name on our list – Adobe Illustrator. This is perhaps the most well-known and popular professional graphics design tool. However, Illustrator can't be topped regarding the sheer breadth of features and options.



*Figure 3.7 How does Adobe Illustrator look like?*

With Illustrator, you can create logos, icons, illustrations, and graphics of all types. There are many tools for editing, manipulating, and tweaking your imagery. Remember that this is a more advanced tool with a steeper learning curve and less beginner-friendly features.

Key Features:

- A comprehensive suite of image editing tools gives you complete control over your designs.
- Works well for both simple creations and complex projects.
- There are many options regarding colours, typography, gradients, and more.
- Functionality for quickly exporting your images in varying sizes, resolutions, and formats.

Pricing: Illustrator is a premium tool requiring a Creative Cloud plan, which starts at \$20.99 per month and comes with extra perks (such as cloud storage and premium fonts).

### **3.2.4 Web design applications and programmes**

*Free website builder:*

1. [Wix](#) – Best All-Around Website Builder.
2. [GoDaddy](#) – Quickest and Most Effective Builder.
3. [Weebly](#) – Ideal for Small Businesses.
4. [Jimdo](#) – Small Online Store Builder.
5. [Site123](#) – Made for Simple Websites.
6. [Strikingly](#) – Made for Simple Websites.
7. [Webflow](#) – Best For Designers.
8. [Webnode](#) – Quick and Easy Setup.
9. [Ucraft](#) – Best for Multilingual Websites.
10. [SimpleSite](#) – Great Mobile Editor.
11. [Mozello](#) – Multilingual websites

*What's Important in a Free Website Builder?*

**Most website builders operate on what's known as a 'freemium' business model**, whereby the customers who want to pay for extra features effectively fund those who are happy with a limited plan – no strings attached. That said, there are some elements that you should pay close attention to when deciding on which free website builder you choose. So, pay close attention to whether or not the builder ticked these boxes:

**Clear domain name.** Free website builders won't let you link up a custom domain name, and free websites are not SEO-friendly because you cannot connect a personalized domain.

**Low upgrade cost.** Upgrading to a paid plan comes with clear benefits, so it's good to know how much this would cost.

**Minimal advertising.** You don't need us to tell you that a website plastered with ads won't look as good as one without!

**Free SSL certificate.** Most website builders include a free SSL certificate, but a couple doesn't. Without an SSL certificate, your website will display as 'Not secure' to visitors. You can buy an SSL certificate separately for around \$10 per year.

**Sufficient storage.** Most free website builders have a cap on the amount of content you can upload to your site. If you know you want to include lots of images or videos, be mindful of how quickly you'd hit this cap.

**Easy to use.** There's no point in finding a website builder that ticks the boxes above only to discover it's clunky and frustrating to use.

**Ecommerce functionality (optional).** This limits your options if you need to sell through your free website builder. Keep an eye out for website builders we've flagged as allowing you to sell on a free plan, like Weebly.

### *How Do I Create a Free Website? (Step-by-Step)*

The process and learning curve differ slightly from builder to builder, but here are the steps you can expect:

- Sign up with the website builder. This will require an email address, password, and possibly a username.
- Choose a template, or answer questions for the design assistant. This is the first fork in the road – most builders will let you select a template to work off at this stage, but some will use design assistance to mock up a website for you based on your answers to a few questions.
- Add in your own content. Get rid of placeholder text and images and replace these with your own.
- Tweak and customize your design. If you want to, you can customize your design further by testing out new layouts and colours or switching to a new template. Most builders let you switch templates after publishing, but remember that Wix doesn't.
- Press publishes! Your domain name will be generated at this point, and your site will be live for the world to see.

### *Is It Worth Upgrading to a Paid Plan?*

As we've seen, free website builders can do a lot – but paid plans allow for a lot more. And the paid plan does not mean expensive; you can take advantage of premium features for as little as \$6/month. The most common benefits of paid plans include the following:

- Removing ads
- Connecting a custom domain name
- Access to more storage and bandwidth
- Advanced marketing and sales tools

The ideal is to check or try some of the existing solutions at some point and decide if you want to have this added cost and if it will have benefits.

### **3.2.5 References and further readings**

- [1] <https://buffer.com/resources/>
- [2] <https://www.hiveage.com/>
- [3] <https://www.w3schools.com/html/>
- [4] <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/ux-design>
- [5] <https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/CSS>
- [6] Access ability a Practical Handbook on Accessible Graphic Design – by the Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario